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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XXXIX—No. 11 **September, 1951**

ALL of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory, apparent self, to recognize our true Self, in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish, we must strive to make other people see that truth, and recognize the reality of the transcendental Self.... As we find the world now, whether Christian, Mussulman, or Pagan, justice is disregarded, and honour and mercy are both flung to the winds.... Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and an illusion; that it is our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge—and saviour in future lives—and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity.

—*"The Great Master's Letter"*

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1875 - 1950

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A U M

Search for the Paths. But, O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the ever-lasting. —*The Voice of the Silence*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XXXIX **September, 1951** **No. 11**

"THE SELF-SACRIFICING PURSUIT"

> For our doctrines to practically react on the so-called moral code, or the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc., we have to preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy. It is . . . the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour—to cause as many of our fellow-creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it—which constitutes the true Theosophist. —The Great Master's Letter

THE theosophist's responsibility and relationship to the Theosophical Movement has been many times examined—and will bear infinitely more re-examinations. Human nature being what it is, a mixture of ideals and schemes, of aspirations and ambitions, of hopes, doubts, fears, and courage, the Theosophical Movement would be a highly precarious undertaking if it depended upon the shifting ground of individual adherence. The theosophist, then, moves from the assumption that he has *not* yet fully comprehended the motive-power and aim of the Teachers of Theosophy, and therefore attempts, periodically, to bring himself closer to such a realization.

In this recurring dilemma, the student of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge has every assistance from his teachers. Not only do theosophical literature and history warn against the evolution of dogmas and dogmatists in theosophical ranks—a psychological hazard in any movement of ideas, and one described and proscribed by philosophers long before 1875—but Mme. Blavatsky and Mr. Judge showed in their own lives how one can study, work, and live without dogmatism, in harmony with fellow-theosophists. For the individual theosophist to be unaware of the possibility of dogmatism in his own mind is for him to be approaching Theosophy untheosophically:

the certainty that one person (ourself or another) *cannot* be dogmatic is as foolish as the opposite assertion that "we know" someone else to be a dogmatist. Neither view permits us to apprehend the universality of outlook which characterizes the great theosophists of every cycle. Dogmatism, like gossip, is a primeval foe of brotherhood, and is thus a bar to spiritual as well as mental progress in living the theosophic life. Both dogmatism and gossip are habits of the personal self which is set upon its own survival, even at the expense of the immortal Ego. Consequently, the chief sufferer, first and last, from these evils—which, in practice, are an almost inseparable combination—is their originator, since these habits represent attempts to violate the integrity of other human beings, and only the man who has first destroyed his own integrity could surrender himself to the infamy of attacking the spiritual independence of another soul.

The problem of preserving the Theosophical Movement from the destructive influence of dogma and internecine slander is, then, essentially a matter for individual application. The only person a man can prevent from being a subversive force in the Theosophical Movement is *himself*—just as he is the only one who can make of himself a steadying and harmonizing source of energy, application, promulgation, and work. In this connection we may see the special relevance of the Master's words describing the "self-sacrificing pursuit" which constitutes the true Theosophist. From one point of view, it is not too much to say that the sacrifice of self *is* the Theosophical Movement, since our power, ability, and knowledge of how to benefit others increases in direct proportion as we set aside the glamour of personal salvation, "individual Nirvana," and determine to "preach and popularize a knowledge of Theosophy."

A standard lament of today's moralists is the utter departure, in the practical affairs of men and nations, from the ethical standards professed in words. This is no recent phenomenon, nor was it new in 1880, when the "Great Master's Letter" was written. We may imagine that the purpose of the Theosophical Movement, over many centuries, and perhaps ages, has been to reform the world's "so-called moral code" from the inside out. Taking together the two sentences quoted at the opening of this article, we may also conclude that, for Theosophy to *react practically* on the ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, and charity, *these very ideas must be demonstrated*

anew by theosophists in the world. If doctrines only were to be disseminated, books and texts would suffice. But the great fundamentals of philosophic ethics have always been extant, in the works of former teachers, saviors, and wise men: this force is insufficient. Practical promulgation demands individual practice, for how could Theosophy be spread broadcast among men, if there were none devoted to truthful presentation of it; to the pure teachings; to helping others even at the cost of denying self some personal status or achievement; and to the essence of charity, which is consideration of the needs of others?

It may well be that we cannot benefit others by means of Theosophy until we ourselves have been benefited, but perhaps we do not always recognize the initial benefit conferred—the knowledge of the *existence of the Truth.* What greater benefit can be imagined than this? To make this primary affirmation, so that all men may hear, and a few understand, is a duty the "youngest" theosophist can begin to discharge, for, as again said in the Master's letter:

> The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles, right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism, are as impossible to [the *civilized* races] now as they were 1880 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were; but to these problems there must be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be quick to confess that ours must be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the TRUTH.

"THE WORLD'S CONDITIONS"

Sometimes it may seem as if everything conspired to laugh at us and deride our best efforts; but we know all that is but the dead weight of the world's conditions which the Masters, and those who have volunteered, are working continuously to lift; and we feel the assurance which comes from understanding that none of this struggle is in vain. Masters do all that is possible for Them to do; we strive to follow Their example in doing Their work in this world of conditioned existence, each in his place; the knowledge that it is Their work, and what should be done, sustains us. —ROBERT CROSBIE

FROM "THE OCCULT WORLD"

III

I AM here enabled [A. P. Sinnett writes] to insert the greater part of a letter addressed by Koot Hoomi to the friend referred to in a former passage, as having opened up a correspondence with him in reference to the idea which he contemplated under certain conditions, of devoting himself entirely to the pursuit of occultism. This letter throws a great deal of light upon some of the metaphysical conceptions of the occultists, and their metaphysics, be it remembered, are a great deal more than abstract speculation.

"Dear Sir—Availing of the first moments of leisure to formally answer your letter of the 17th ultimo, I will now report the result of my conference with our chiefs upon the proposition therein contained, trying at the same time to answer all your questions.

"I am first to thank you on behalf of the whole section of our fraternity that is especially interested in the welfare of India for an offer of help whose importance and sincerity no one can doubt. Tracing our lineage through the vicissitudes of Indian civilization from a remote past, we have a love of our mother-land so deep and passionate that it has survived even the broadening and cosmopolitanizing (pardon me if that is not an English word) effect of our studies in the laws of Nature. And so I, and every other Indian patriot, feel the strongest gratitude for every kind word or deed that is given in her behalf.

"Imagine, then, that since we are all convinced that the degradation of India is largely due to the suffocation of her ancient spirituality, and that whatever helps to restore that higher standard of thought and morals, must be regenerating in national force, every one of us would naturally and without urging, be disposed to push forward a society untainted by selfish motive, whose object is the revival of ancient science, and tendency, to rehabilitate our country in the world's estimation. Take this for granted without further assevera-

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NOTE.—The Master's letter quoted in these extracts from A. P. Sinnett's book, was originally addressed to A. O. Hume, Sinnett's associate in the proposed new "branch" of the T. S. Hume was a prominent Anglo-Indian official and a famous ornithologist.

tions. But you know, as any man who has read history, that patriots may burst their hearts in vain if circumstances are against them. Sometimes it has happened that no human power, not even the fury and force of the loftiest patriotism, has been able to bend an iron destiny aside from its fixed course, and nations have gone out like torches dropped into the water in the engulfing blackness of ruin. Thus, we who have the sense of our country's fall, though not the power to lift her up at once, cannot do as we would either as to general affairs or this particular one. And with the readiness, but not the right to meet your advances more than half way, we are forced to say that the idea entertained by Mr. Sinnett and yourself is impracticable in part. It is, in a word, impossible for myself or any Brother, or even an advanced neophyte, to be specially assigned and set apart as the guiding spirit or chief of the Anglo-Indian branch. We know it would be a good thing to have you and a few of your colleagues regularly instructed and shown the phenomena and their rationale. For though none but you few would be convinced, still it would be a decided gain to have even a few Englishmen, of first-class ability, enlisted as students of Asiatic Psychology. We are aware of all this, and much more; hence we do not refuse to correspond with, and otherwise help you in various ways. But what we do refuse is, to take any other responsibility upon ourselves than this periodical correspondence and assistance with our advice, and, as occasion favours, such tangible, possibly visible, proofs, as would satisfy you of our presence and interest. To "guide" you we will not consent. However much we may be able to do, yet we can promise only to give you the full measure of your deserts. Deserve much, and we will prove honest debtors; little, and you need only expect a compensating return.

"This is not a mere text taken from a schoolboy's copybook, though it sounds so, but only the clumsy statement of the law of our order, and we cannot transcend it. Utterly unacquainted with Western, especially English, modes of thought and action, were we to meddle in an organization of such a kind, you would find all your fixed habits and traditions incessantly clashing, if not with the new aspirations themselves, at least with their modes of realization as suggested by us. You could not get unanimous consent to go even the length you might yourself.

"I have asked Mr. Sinnett to draft a plan embodying your joint ideas for submission to our chiefs, this seeming the shortest way to a mutual agreement. Under our 'guidance' your branch could not live, you not being men to be guided at all in that sense. Hence the society would be a premature birth and a failure, looking as incongruous as a Paris Daumont drawn by a team of Indian yaks or camels. You ask us to teach you true science—the occult aspect of the known side of Nature; and this you think can be as easily done as asked. You do not seem to realize the tremendous difficulties in the way of imparting even the rudiments of *our* science to those who have been trained in the familiar methods of yours. You do not see that the more you have of the one the less capable you are of instinctively comprehending the other, for a man can only think in his worn grooves, and unless he has the courage to fill up these, and make new ones for himself, he must perforce travel on the old lines.

"Allow me a few instances. In conformity with exact science you would define but one cosmic energy, and see no difference between the energy expended by the traveller who pushes aside the bush that obstructs his path, and the scientific experimenter who expends an equal amount of energy in setting a pendulum in motion. We do; for we know there is a world of difference between the two. The one uselessly dissipates and scatters force, the other concentrates and stores it. And here please understand that I do not refer to the relative utility of the two, as one might imagine, but only to the fact that in the one case there is but brute force flung out without any transmutation of that brute energy into the higher potential form of spiritual dynamics, and in the other there is just that.

"Please do not consider me vaguely metaphysical. The idea I wish to convey is that the result of the highest intellection in the scientifically occupied brain is the evolution of a sublimated form of spiritual energy, which, in the cosmic action, is productive of illimitable results; while the automatically acting brain holds, or stores up in itself, only a certain quantum of brute force that is unfruitful of benefit for the individual or humanity. The human brain is an exhaustless generator of the most refined quality of cosmic force out of the low, brute energy of Nature; and the complete adept has made himself a centre from which irradiate potentialities that beget correlations upon correlations through Æons of time to come. This is the

key to the mystery of his being able to project into and materialize in the visible world the forms that his imagination has constructed out of inert cosmic matter in the invisible world. The adept does not create anything new, but only utilizes and manipulates materials which Nature has in store around him, and material which, throughout eternities, has passed through all the forms. He has but to choose the one he wants, and recall it into objective existence. Would not this sound to one of your 'learned' biologists like a madman's dream?

"You say there are few branches of science with which you do not possess more or less acquaintance, and that you believe you are doing a certain amount of good, having acquired the position to do this by long years of study. Doubtless you do; but will you permit me to sketch for you still more clearly the difference between the modes of physical (called 'exact' often out of mere compliment) and metaphysical sciences? The latter, as you know, being incapable of verification before mixed audiences, is classed by Mr. Tyndall with the fiction of poetry. The realistic science of fact, on the other hand, is utterly prosaic. Now, for us, poor unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of moral results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind. And what, in its proud isolation, can be more utterly indifferent to everyone and everything, or more bound to nothing but the selfish requisites for its advancement, than this materialistic science of fact?

"May I ask then, ... what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity, viewed as an intelligent whole? What care they for *Man* as an isolated atom of this great and harmonious whole, even though they may be sometimes of practical use to him? Cosmic energy is something eternal and incessant; matter is indestructible: and there stand the scientific facts. Doubt them, and you are an ignoramus; deny them, a dangerous lunatic, a bigot; pretend to improve upon the theories—an impertinent charlatan. And yet even these scientific facts never suggested any proof to the world of experimenters that Nature consciously prefers that matter should be indestructible under organic rather than inorganic forms, and that she works slowly but incessantly towards the realization of this object—the evolution of conscious life out of inert material. Hence, their ignorance about the

scattering and concretion of cosmic energy in its metaphysical aspects, their division about Darwin's theories, their uncertainty about the degree of conscious life in separate elements, and, as a necessity, the scornful rejection of every phenomenon outside their own stated conditions, and the very idea of worlds of semi-intelligent if not intellectual forces at work in hidden corners of Nature.

"To give you another practical illustration—we see a vast difference between the two qualities of two equal amounts of energy expended by two men, of whom one, let us suppose, is on his way to his daily quiet work, and another on his way to denounce a fellow-creature at the police-station, while the men of science see none; and we—not they—see a specific difference between the energy in the motion of the wind and that of a revolving wheel. And why? Because every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself, coalescing we might term it, with an elemental—that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate with the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power, an evil one as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offsprings of his fancies, desires, impulses, and passions; a current which re-acts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes in contact with it, in proportion to its dynamic intensity.

"The Buddhist calls this his 'Skandha'; the Hindu gives it the name of 'Karma.' The adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously. The adept, to be successful and preserve his power, must dwell in solitude, and more or less within his own soul. Still less does exact science perceive that while the building ant, the busy bee, the nidifacient bird, accumulates each in its own humble way as much cosmic energy in its potential form as a Haydn, a Plato, or a ploughman turning his furrow, in theirs; the hunter who kills game for his pleasure or profit, or the positivist who applies his intellect to proving that $+ \times + = -$, are wasting and scattering energy no less than the tiger which springs upon its prey. They all

rob Nature instead of enriching her, and will all, in the degree of their intelligence, find themselves accountable.

"Exact experimental science has nothing to do with morality, virtue, philanthropy—therefore, can make no claim upon our help until it blends itself with metaphysics. Being but a cold classification of facts outside man, and existing before and after him, her domain of usefulness ceases for us at the outer boundary of these facts; and whatever the inferences and results for humanity from the materials acquired by her method, she little cares. Therefore, as our sphere lies entirely outside hers—as far as the path of *Uranus* is outside the Earth's—we distinctly refuse to be broken on any wheel of her construction. Heat is but a mode of motion to her, and motion develops heat, but why the mechanical motion of the revolving wheel should be metaphysically of a higher value than the heat into which it is gradually transformed she has yet to discover.

"The philosophical and transcendental (hence absurd) notion of the mediæval Theosophists that the final progress of human labour, aided by the incessant discoveries of man, must one day culminate in a process which, in imitation of the Sun's energy—in its capacity as a direct motor—shall result in the evolution of nutritious food out of inorganic matter, is unthinkable for men of science. Were the sun, the great nourishing father of our planetary system, to hatch granite chickens out of a boulder 'under test conditions' tomorrow, they (the men of science) would accept it as a scientific fact without wasting a regret that the fowls were not alive so as to feed the hungry and the starving. But let a *shaberon* cross the Himalayas in a time of famine and multiply sacks of rice for the perishing multitudes—as he could—and your magistrates and collectors would probably lodge him in jail to make him confess what granary he had robbed. This is exact science and your realistic world. And though, as you say, you are impressed by the vast extent of the world's ignorance on every subject, which you pertinently designate as a 'few palpable facts collected and roughly generalized, and a technical jargon invented to hide man's ignorance of all that lies behind these facts,' and though you speak of your faith in the infinite possibilities of Nature, yet you are content to spend your life in a work which aids only that same exact science. . . ."

THE ETERNAL VERITIES

II: Self As Seen

SINCE "All is Life," it must be that every part of Life is identical fundamentally with every other part, and with the whole: "There is no separateness at all"—in Reality. But the very expression evidences the triune nature of Life, of Man, of everything that is; that is to say, of everything which is manifested, or *seen* in any sense. That Unity lies undisturbed within and without all change, is easily perceived: the Intelligence is incapable of imagining anything short of Unity as the sufficient Source and Destination of all this vast diversity.

As fact, it is unmistakably and unavoidably seen that this is a universe of action, of change, of diversity and multiplicity—in short, the universe of Karma, not of "matter," as Westerners imagine to be the "finality" of all things. And what is matter? Even "Matter" is a unitary concept of the Seer, in the philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion, or Theosophy: the word is used to indicate anything whatever that can be perceived in any way whatever. "Matter" is the opposite pole of Life to the Seer: it is "the aggregate of objects of possible perceptions"; it is, to the true Seer, the Occultist, "that totality of existences (or beings) in the Kosmos, which falls within any of the planes of possible perception." Like its *meta*-physical counterpart, "Time," it is nothing else than the sequence of our own states of consciousness.

Nothing—absolutely nothing—exists to us except as it is "seen" in some sense. If not present in our consciousness, it is non-existent to us. But its existence to itself no more depends on us than our existence to ourself depends on it. It *is,* whether present to our consciousness or absent from it; we *are,* whether present or absent to it. What is eternally present and never absent is Self. Subject and Object, Seer and Seen, "spirit" and "matter," have each only a relative existence—the being, that which is Absolute in both, is Self. "Spirit" apart from "Matter," subject apart from object, Seer apart from the seen, is in sober truth as impossible of imagination as it is impossible to conceive of Space independently of any object in it; of

Motion existing in and of itself, with no field of change (space in which to move) and no object to alter in its relation, whether to its own constituent elements or to other objects. Everything that is, is both Seer and Seen, both Spirit and Matter, both subject and object, but in itself is neither the one nor the other—it is THAT which ever is. The metaphysical Universe is therefore of necessity dual, as the spiritual Universe is of the same necessity a unity. Equally, the physical or "objective" Universe is a trinity—for it is impossible to imagine change without action, or action except upon the *principle* of the lever.

Spiritually seen, Karma is the Principle of action, that which eternally *is* in all Life; the One Element common to all change, or manifestation of Life; its Creator, its Preserver, its Destroyer, its Regenerator. Whether we call this Principle by one name or another, as "deity," or "law," or "energy," or "Fohat," it is the connecting link between the Unmanifested and the Manifested LIFE. *Internal differentiation*—the subjective or metaphysical Universe—is, in relation to the external, or manifested, world as the foetus is to the babe: it is a precedent, gestatory stage of a *continuous process.* Metaphysical existence precedes, dwells in, and survives, manifested existence. As says the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 238): "The reincarnationists and believers in Karma alone dimly perceive that the whole secret of Life is in the unbroken series of its manifestations. . . ."

The "Wheel of the Good Law" is a graphic symbol of this eternal precession of the Equinox: as each being moves *forward* in the path of the Seer—the "Eternal Pilgrim"—the Universe of the Seen appears to move *backwards,* the bottom moving to the top, the top of the wheel moving to the bottom. Both "top" and "bottom," both Seer and Seen, are *Maya,* an "illusion"—if taken to be other than they are, a continuous change of relation. Unless both birth and death are seen as the continuous and coincident progression of Life from the Spiritual, through the Metaphysical, to the Physical, "downward"; from the Physical, through the Metaphysical, to the Spiritual, "upward"; unless "spiritual," "metaphysical," "physical," are seen for what they are—states of consciousness and no more—the Seer will of necessity regard whichever one he may be in at the moment as the "real." If he is in Nirvana, that state will seem to him the reality; if in the metaphysical *lokas* or *talas,* these will be real—to him, the

victim of his own ignorance, spiritually and psychically; if in the objective or physical phase of his cycle—grossest delusion of all—he will become that strangest of all phenomena in manifested Life: a Seer who is convinced that his identity and continuity depend upon an ever-changing body that can be "seen" with the five senses.

In all this, in each man, is the faithful mirror of eternal, of cosmic, of universal processes—the Manvantaras and Pralayas of "this whole assemblage of beings" called the Kosmos. Who pauses to reflect that each minutest change of relation between the Seer and the Seen involves and duplicates the whole vast majestic panorama of "the Day and Night of Brahma"? That each human day is their incessant repetition, metaphysically, as each human life is their repetition physically? That each cycle of incarnations is the spiritual repetition by the Individual Life, the Self each one in Reality *is,* of the procession and precession of that collectivity of Souls called the Universe?

Yet all this may be seen by him who begins to look "with the subtle sight of the subtle-sighted"—with the Eye of Self.

BIRTH'S PRELUDE

Passing through the twilight of life into the dawn of a new birth, we cross that unknown bridge of mystery which we think of as death, but which is a living reality and an unbroken link in the chain of eternal existence.

As we approach this span in our pilgrimage on evolution's endless highway, there appears before us the picture of our past, and our earthly life through which we have traveled becomes as an open book.

Our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures, our hopes and aspirations: none of these have been sealed by the grave, destroyed in the funeral pyre, or stilled in ocean's depth. They stand out on the screen before us distinct and vivid—living energies to prepare us for a new birth, in a new body. That body we will use at some future time in the great cycle of eternity, when we can gather together the broken threads of the past and weave them into the tapestry of a better future.

DEMETER—THE PILGRIM SOUL

> Nothing better than those MYSTERIES, by which we are polished into gentleness (humanity, kindness) and softened. —Cicero
>
> At Thebes, Koré and Demeter, the *Kabirim,* had a sanctuary, and at Memphis, the Kabiri had a temple so sacred, that none, excepting the priests, were suffered to enter their holy precincts. . . .
>
> It is the Kabiri who are credited with having revealed, by *producing* corn or wheat, the great boon of agriculture. What *Isis-Osiris,* the once living Kabiria, has done in Egypt, that Ceres is said to have done in Sicily; they all belong to one class.—*S.D.*

IN ancient Greece the truths of life and after-life were taught by means of dramatic performances. Diodorus of Sicily, Herodotus, and Sanchoniathon, the Phoenician—the oldest of historians—tell us that these symbolic dramas originated in the night of time, centuries and probably thousands of years prior to the historical period. Theosophy teaches that the Greek tales of gods and goddesses in Hellenic Mysteries stem from a pre-Atlantean past, reaching back even to Lemurian days. They hark back to that time when the whole world, the totality of mankind, had but one religion and "one lip." This is why all countries have the same fundamental pantheon, varied by the adaptations of time and the generations.

Classic testimony is not lacking as to the geographical extent of these sacred presentations. "The famous Atlantis exists no longer, but we can hardly doubt that it did once," says Proclus, "for Marcellus, who wrote a history of Ethiopian affairs, says that such, and so great an island once existed, and this is evidenced by those who composed histories relative to the external sea. For *they relate that in this time there were seven islands* in the Atlantic sea sacred to Proserpine; and besides these, three of immense magnitude, sacred to Pluto . . . Jupiter . . . and Neptune." Strabo, too, speaks of an island near to Britannia, "where Ceres and Persephone were worshipped with the same rites as in Samothrace and this island was Sacred Ierna," where a perpetual fire was lit. The Druids of Ireland believed in the rebirth of man, for, as Diodorus says, they declared that the souls of men, after determinate periods, would pass into other bodies. Thus, among others, the story of Ceres (of the Romans

—Demeter with the Greeks) and Persephone was used by the Atlanteans, Hellenic Greeks and Druidic Irish to teach about the reincarnations of the immortal soul.

The very existence of Atlantis was wisely kept a secret of the Mysteries. Plato gave out hints only in his cautiously-worded tale. Doubtless the Mystes (new initiates) were told of the antiquity of the drama of Ceres which they enacted during the Eleusinian mysteries. But if the average Greek of that time had known of the degradation of his Atlantean ancestors, the fascination of those ancient sins might have drawn the culture of the Hellenic world down to a similar fate; hence the secrecy; the flower of wisdom from once glorious Atlantis was preserved close within temple walls. The old pagan historians were careful to keep silent on certain Mysteries of the "wise" (Magi) and Pausanias was warned in a dream, he says, not to unveil the holy rites of the temple of Demeter and Persephone at Athens.

The Mysteries were composed of two parts, the lesser at Agrae, and the higher ones as Eleusinia. The substance of the early part of the Greater Mysteries has come down to us as the Myth of Persephone and Ceres. When the light of Theosophy is thrown upon this hoary epic, it shines forth as an allegory of the Ego, the pilgrim-soul.

Men like Plato, Pythagoras and Iamblichus, renowned for their wisdom and exalted lives, took part in the Eleusinian Mysteries and spoke of them with veneration. Iamblichus said that they were designed to free man from his lower passions, "at the same time vanquishing all evil thought, through *the awful sanctity* with which these rites were accompanied." In these celebrated rites persons of both sexes and of all classes were allowed to take part, and though participation was obligatory, few attained the secret, final initiation.

Three characters dominate the drama, corresponding to the trinity of Spirit (Persephone), Mind (Demeter), and Matter (the Matron Babou). Persephone was called Monogenes, "the only begotten," and is sometimes figured with three faces, symbol of the three Higher Principles, cosmic and human (just as is Christ in certain old Russian ikons). Demeter was considered as the intellectual soul—Manas not united to Buddhi—half emanation from spirit and half tainted with matter through a succession of incarnations. Matron Babou, the Enchantress, is matter, the physical body.

The festival of the Eleusinian Mysteries began in the month which corresponds with our September, the time of grape-gathering, the grape being a symbol of wisdom. It lasted from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the month—seven days. In the mighty temple at Eleusis the candidates assembled after strict preparation and fasting. They were to be thrice baptised in the sacred temple lakes. The Hierophant of the mysteries who gave the candidate the "trial by water," during which he was thrice plunged, was named Hydranos. This was the neophyte's baptism by the Holy Spirit which moves on the waters of Space. Paul refers to St. John as Hydranos, literally, "the Baptist." These holy pagan ceremonies were later appropriated by the Christian church.

The sacrifice of bread and wine was common to many ancient nations. Cicero mentions it in his works and wonders at the strangeness of the rite. H. P. Blavatsky wrote: "There had been an esoteric meaning attached to it from the first establishment of the Mysteries, and the Eucharistia is one of the oldest rites of antiquity. With the hierophants it had nearly the same significance as with the Christians. Ceres was *bread,* and Bacchus was *wine;* the former meaning regeneration of life from the seed, and the latter—the grape—the emblem of wisdom and knowledge: the accumulation of the spirit of things, and the fermentation and subsequent strength of that esoteric knowledge being justly symbolized by wine" (*Isis* II, 44). Symbolically, Persephone was depicted with two ears of wheat in her hand, as is the Virgin Mary, and Virgo of the Zodiac.

The four torch-bearers of the Eleusinian Mysteries, called Dadouchos, appeared in public only to preside over the so-called torch race at Athens. In the hush which preceded the mystery play, the bright flames from their torches gleamed upon the keys worn by the priestesses of Demeter as symbol of their office; the key of secrecy, also the key to unlock the wisdom about to be revealed. The outer courtyard alone of the Eleusinian temple held thirty thousand worshippers, but today no vestige of it remains. The temple was razed to the ground by Christian black-robed priests.

Using the style of the old classic dramas, the English poet, Robert Bridges, visualizes the mystery-plays of ancient Greece, in his poem, "Demeter—A Mask." Doubtless memories of another life gave him the following sensitive appraisal of the Eleusinian mysteries:

Suppose . . . there wer' a temple in heaven,
Which, dedicated to the unknown Cause
And worship of the unseen, had power to draw
All that was worthy and good within its gate:
And that the spirits who enter'd there became
Not only purified and comforted,
But that the mysteries of the shrine were such,
That the initiated bathed in light
Of infinite intelligence, and saw
The meaning and the reason of all things,
All at a glance distinctly, and perceived
The origin of all things to be good,
And the end good, and that what appears as evil
Is a film of dust, that faln thereon,
May,—at one stroke of the hand,—
Be brush'd away, and show the good beneath,
Solid and fair and shining: If moreover
This blessed vision were of so great power
That none coud e'er forget it or relapse
To doubtful ignorance. . . .

All myths have a physical plane or "nature" interpretation. Thus viewed, Persephone—the goddess of flowers and summer—is simply imprisoned underground during winter, six months out of every year. But Theosophy shows the metaphysical, inner meanings of myths and Mme. Blavatsky writes in *Isis Unveiled* that "Initiation into the Mysteries, as every intelligent person knows, was a dramatic representation of scenes in the underworld." Thus it is suggested that, like the biblical book of Job, the story of Demeter's wanderings is simply another tale of initiation. Initiation is a death out of this world consciously, as well as a conscious rebirth for the sake of others.

Robert Bridges relates in verse the symbol-tale of Demeter. Of the many possible interpretations of this myth he has chosen one in accord with the teachings of Theosophy which show the correspondence of the main characters to the principles of man's nature. In theosophical terms: Demeter is the pilgrim soul (manas not united to buddhi), Persephone is the spiritual, changeless *monad,* and Matron Babou is matter—the physical body. The story begins in the Elysian fields *(Devachan),* with Persephone surrounded by nymphs: "her passion is for flowers, and every tenderness."

Though warned by Demeter not to stray from her playmates, Persephone wanders away to pluck more splendid blossoms. Uproot-

ing a strange plant, more beauteous than any other, she sees the hole left by the root enlarging to a deep cavern from which Pluto, king of the Underworld (earth) arises. Catching Persephone up in his chariot, Pluto drives down into the shadows. The place Persephone now finds herself in is dreary. However, she realizes that this is her nemesis *(karma)*. Though somber, Pluto was a very respectable personage, representing pure justice. Persephone saw she was but fulfilling *Kuklos Anagkes,* the Circle of Necessity.

Meantime, Demeter, who heard Persephone's last cry, searches distractedly until, ensnared by the soothing Enchantress Babou, she is persuaded to drink the magic potion of the cup of forgetfulness. After nine days and nights of wandering (a figure for the prenatal states) she puts her "god-head off"; her search and sufferings are forgotten when she becomes a mortal on earth. Reborn as a child, it is not until she attains the age of reason that Demeter recalls her quest for her Persephone—the awakening *manas* yearning again for its birthright, wisdom. Hermes alone, the god of Wisdom, can bring Persephone back, for it is his task to guide the soul after death and to raise the dead to life. Demeter demands that Zeus, father of the gods, restore her lost one. Her child's last cry, re-echoing in her heart like the persistent voice of conscience, re-kindles her determination to persevere. At last, when she has done her best, Demeter waits the fateful outcome, surrounded by nymphs to whom she speaks:

> I had been blinded. Think ye for yourselves . . .
> What vantage were it to mankind at large
> That one should be immortal,—if all beside
> Must die and suffer misery as before? . . .
> So, questioning myself what real gift
> I might bestow on man to help his state,
> I saw that sorrow was his life-companion,
> To be embrac't bravely, not weakly shun'd;
> That as by toil man winneth happiness,
> Thro' tribulation he must come to peace. . . .
> Ye might not understand.
> My tale to you must be a tale of deeds—
> How first I bade King Keleos build for me
> A temple in Eleusis, and ordain'd
> My worship, and the mysteries of my thought;
> Where in the sorrow that I underwent
> Man's state is pattern'd; and in picture shewn
> The way of his salvation. . . .

After six long months Pluto releases his queen. While in the Underworld she has eaten of a pomegranate—the fruit was held sacred among the Syrians and Hebrews as symbol of birth or incarnation. Everyone has recognized in her return with the seventh month, the rebirth of spring after winter, but these natural seasons are only reflections of metaphysical and cosmic cycles. The inner higher meaning reveals that the seven-day initiation at Eleusis was symbolic of stages in the spiritual life of the soul. Thus the seven days, seven months, seven-year periods in the life of man, and seven lives to attain the goal, are types of the sevening principle in Nature.

Like Jesus, Osiris, Buddha, and all great teachers, Persephone descended into hell (our earth as well as the after-death states) for the liberation of those chained in misery. Hermes with his twined serpent staff, symbolic of wisdom and prudence, leads her back, and Demeter asks, "What saw'st thou, child? what saw'st thou?"

Persephone: What have I seen?
The downward pathway to the gates of death:
The skeleton of earthly being, stript
Of all disguise: the sudden void of night:
The spectral records of unwholesome fear: . . .
The naked retribution of all wrong. . . .
Demeter: . . . I seek to know
The mystery of evil. Hast thou seen it?
Persephone: I have seen it. Could I truly rule my kingdom
Not having seen it?

When Demeter urges her to describe her vision, Persephone declines:

Nay, the thing's
Not to be told, because there are no words
Of gods or men to paint the inscrutable
And full initiation of hell.—I saw
The meaning and the reason of all things,
All at a glance. . . .

Demeter concludes—

To-day hard-featured and inscrutable Fate
Stands to mine eyes reveal'd, nor frowns upon me.
I thought to find thee sorrowful: I find thee
Far other than thou wert, nor hurt by Hell.
I thought I must console thee, but 'tis thou
Playest the comforter: I thought to teach thee,
And had prepared my lesson, word by word;
But thou art still beyond me.

These closing lines show a reverent Demeter, who (like Arjuna) stands humbled before the revealed power and majesty of the god within. Yet still she has not quite grasped the meaning of her pilgrimage; she thinks Persephone has altered, whereas it is she who has evolved. Through service among men she has earned her heart's desire.

Why was this mystery play about the goddess of spring celebrated at the autumnal equinox? The fact of these mysteries being held in September provides a clue to a profound truth; that the yearly cycle of seasons is but a reflection of the soul-life presented in this myth. Applying the analogy, season by season, it is December twenty-first that the cry of the soul is heard as it is borne away toward earth-life by the irresistible force of Karma. Well did the ancients realize the meaning of such imprisonment when they greeted with sorrow the arrival of the newborn and rejoiced at the departure of the soul through death. At Easter-time the long months of hidden preparation burst forth into the glory of spring when actual incarnation takes place. Christmas is the seed-time and the Vernal Equinox is the birthday of nature. From March twenty-first to June twenty-first is the age of forgetfulness, the golden age of childhood and flowers. However, as the summer passes, the mind, upon attaining the age of reason, remembers its search. When harvest or the time of grape-gathering arrives, the second (spiritual) birth takes place. This second birth *while in a body* was enacted during the Eleusinian mysteries. The cycle of life, death and resurrection is consciously undergone by the initiate for the sake of suffering, ignorant mankind.

The fall of the year brings a devachan of assimilation and building; this rising cycle once more circles round to December twenty-first when again—if the Mysteries be remembered—the soul has that glorious vision before incarnation, sees the future life to be just, and willingly bows to the decree of *Kuklos Anagkes,* the circle of necessity. With the wisdom and love acquired through her wanderings and trials of initiation, Demeter wishes to help all mankind to take up the search during which she found her lost happiness and fulfilled her destiny. Well did she explain, "Ye might not understand. My tale to you must be a tale of deeds"—which were immortalized in the institution of the mysteries.

THOUGHTS ON "THE TWIN DOCTRINES"

IT is very easy to say that we believe in the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, but to bring their implications to bear on our thoughts and subsequent actions, in whatever field of endeavor we may be engaged, is a task demanding supreme courage and a deep insight into the operations of the twin laws. That we make or mar our future, that we by our daily thoughts and actions not only influence the course of our present life but also weave the pattern of our next incarnation, whether for weal or woe—is a truism all Theosophists accept as axiomatic. But how many of us who read these lines are consistently governed, consciously or unconsciously, by this transcendental thought? Karma and Reincarnation, the inseparable twins, the major supports upon which rests the great Edifice of Theosophy, although implementing perfect justice, as an unbiased study of their operations will disclose, are frequently, and regretfully, entirely absent when paramount decisions are being formulated. Were we always to remember the immutability of these two great laws, never would we embark on a course of action likely to bring regret and remorse in its train.

When we seek to envisage karmic consequences in their operations, many occult truths are revealed to us in the course of our meditations, the strength of which enables us "to live as those who live for happiness," even though the outlook for others may be dark and forbidding. Therefore, we are to ponder all problems in the light of their relation to Karma and Reincarnation, for only by so doing can we hope to glean a clear evaluation of current events, and help to set in motion forces that will stem the catastrophic tide which is threatening to engulf us. Let us hold tenaciously to these twin thoughts, since without their guiding beam we fail miserably and become hopelessly confused in the maze of modern worldly happenings; and, conversely, if our thoughts are impregnated with theosophical truths, much which has defied explanation or solution in the past, will suddenly become crystal clear. The knowledge that we shall assuredly reap the results of our thoughts and actions on the individual, national or international level, either in this or the next incarnation, should make us pause, when approaching a decision, to

reflect whether or not we are bringing ourselves as well as others into collision with these implacable laws. Theosophy is not only a fascinating occult philosophy meriting earnest and exhaustive study, with the door left ajar for intuition to enter, but also a way of life bequeathed to us by Teachers whose aim is to enrich our thoughts and to help us to contribute in some measure to the development and unfoldment of the great divine evolutionary plan. By our acceptance of, and obeisance to, the twin laws, we may reap just rewards of our labors.

It is not enough to say that we are Theosophists. The burden of responsibility such an avowal entails is tremendous, for we have pledged ourselves not only to study its tenets, but by our thoughts and actions—overshadowed by our knowledge of the twin laws—to shed its beneficent ray, to the extent our development will permit, amongst those who are seeking the way. In our eagerness for advancement we sometimes overlook the simple fundamentals of Theosophy, and so when we imagine we are making reasonable progress on the hazardous path, we are in reality retarding our development by our neglect of, or failure to aid, those in our world seeking help and sustenance. As the Dyhan Chohans are the builders of the great manifested universe, we, too, should be builders—of a better way of life among mankind—and unless, in conjunction with our studies, we direct our thoughts and energies toward that end, it is folly to cherish the belief that our studies alone *without positive action* will ensure good Karma and a Reincarnation fruitful in the work of Theosophy.

Eastern Proverbs

Death is a black camel that kneels at everybody's door.
Let us open our eyes, or they will be opened for us.
A little hill in a low place thinks itself a great mountain.
A thousand sorrows do not pay a debt.
Fallen flowers do not return to their branches.

—*Lucifer,* June, 1889

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—

IS *there such a thing as the evolutionary value of error?*

This is an impossible question, we shall see, for if we say "yes, there is," we promote error into far too respectable a place, while if we say "no," we deny an obvious psychological fact. What we can say is that *there is nothing automatically educative about error, nor about mistakes.* Those who hold to a philosophy of "Experience" are prone to consider that merely passing through an experience confers upon one a greater degree of knowledge. Nothing could be further from the case. It may be said that the nature of some experiences—and, interestingly enough, they most often are phases of psychic experience—is to bewilder the mind, and dull its perception of the real work which lies before it.

To distinguish terms, let us call that action a *mistake* which is committed out of misunderstanding or inadvertence, whereas *error* involves a moral deviation, or something fundamentally dishonest. Those who take the saying in *The Bhagavad-Gita,* that "all human acts are involved in fault," as a justification for tolerating even intentional wrongdoing, thus draw unwarrantable conclusions. The man who knows little, but who strives sincerely to know more, will by persistence rise above—and eventually rectify—his mistakes. But the man who does not live up to his perception of right and wrong, dulls his discrimination to the point where, finally, if he persists, he will no longer *know* right from wrong. No more painful condition than this is conceivable, for it is equivalent on the moral plane to a man in full possession of his power suddenly rendered blind.

Whether the mistake is our own or someone else's, the perception of it depends upon our knowledge of principle and our power of discernment and discrimination. A mistake in representing the philosophy of Theosophy, for example, cannot be dealt with unless we find out what is the *correct* representation of Theosophy, that is, unless we check up with the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and Wm. Q. Judge. As was long ago said, we may disagree with this or that idea the teachers have presented; but the fact remains that Theosophy *as we know it* is that body of doctrine given out by H. P. Blavatsky. Mistakes in interpretation require the recognition of

where our interpretation diverges from the theosophical point of view expressed by H.P.B. Mistakes are overcome by *further learning.*

Our responsibility with respect to *error* goes deeper than this, since error pertains to what is loosely called our "morality," or ethics. Whereas we commonly do not discover a mistake until afterwards, *we always know when we are making an error*—otherwise, whatever we did would simply be a mistake. The difficulty arises when we must admit to ourselves our "intellectual dishonesty" in this or that instance, and set about to make reparation. A person who makes mistakes can still be trusted; a person given to error is untrustworthy, until he determines to be honest with himself. This, from Mr. Judge, is enlightening: "Motive is then the main point for . . . every inquirer to study. If he is sure of his motives, and that they are neither indifferent, curious, selfish, nor imprudent, and he trusts in the Unity of the Supreme Soul, he cannot be in much danger" (*Letters,* p. 83). It is not mistakes that "ought to be feared," but the attitude of mind which can turn mistakes into *error.* Sincere mistakes may be said to be mitigated by the karma of good faith.

Does the saying, "blood is thicker than water," have any validity in the light of Universal Brotherhood?

This phrase is often used, we know, to prop the waning integrity of a family relationship, but actually, the family unit is bound together—or separated into its constituent parts—by *Karma,* and not by ties of a physical nature. In the light of Universal Brotherhood, we need only quote H. P. Blavatsky's telling statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 421 fn.) that "Verily mankind is 'of one blood,' *but not of the same essence.*" In the same way, a family may share the same physical blood-line, but differ radically in "essence" or character. Here we may refer to Mr. Judge's "Living the Higher Life" (THEOSOPHY 30: 198), where he says, "A Dugpa (Black Magician) is frequently born in the same family [as a Buddha] and becomes the cream of all its evil propensities. . . . in every family where Adepts and Gnanis are (or choose to be) frequently born, often Dugpas are also born, as a matter of course."

Not that we should peer suspiciously at brother, sister, father, uncle, and son, but we are to grasp the fact that, if blood is thicker than water, the individual's own character is "thicker" than either, and it alone is of primary consequence. On the matter of partiality

in general, either to members of our family or others to whom we are psychologically "drawn," there is this strong warning from Mr. Judge in his *Letters* (p. 161): "Before you can become an occultist you have to give up every prejudice, every earthly liking, every feeling of preference for one thing over another. . . . A deed of kindness done with partiality may become evil, *e.g.,* by stirring up animosity in the mind of others. It is necessary, when acting, to lose all sense of identity and to become an abstract power."

The August "Youth-Companions Ask—" suggests that in modern terms the vow of poverty might mean that a man refused to use any compulsive power over another person. What is meant by the term COMPULSIVE? *It seems to deliberately omit* SUGGESTIVE *power.*

The questioner obviously does not refer to the use of suggestion in its original meaning as the unobtrusive imparting of an idea, but rather to the more specialized meaning it has derived from its use in the field of hypnosis. The theosophical philosophy stands unequivocally opposed to such "suggesting," as being in fact far more compulsive than any physical force could ever be, because it penetrates, through the hypnotic trance, beyond all the natural defenses of the human mind, and reduces it to a slavery far more complete and devastating than any physical imprisonment could achieve. In renouncing "all compulsive power" over other human beings, then, this practice must be among the first to go.

Let us postulate that the power of suggestion is in direct opposition to the power of reason. Any playing on the emotions of another, any manipulation of his prejudices, is an attempt to subject his mind through a seemingly casual influence on his psychic nature. With the advent of the psychological sciences, this practice has become an open door to corruption as well as to cures. It is significant that H.P.B.'s purpose was to raise the "Manas-Buddhi of the race" —and not through pandering to its *kamic* principle. A good article to read for the theosophical position in regard to the use of suggestion is H.P.B.'s "Black Magic in Science" (THEOSOPHY 30: 491) where she examines the subject of hypnotic suggestion. On the more subtle forms of this same power, read in the *Key to Theosophy* (p. 254) where she equates the use of "undue personal psychological influence" with Black Magic. "The first exercise of Black Magic," Mr. Judge remarked, "is to psychologize people."

MAHATMAS—OR MEN-SPIRITS

[The following are extracts from a copy of a letter written by H.P.B. to a personal friend on July 5, 1890, and are reprinted from *Theosophia.*—Eds. THEOSOPHY.]

ALL depends, you see, on what each of us means by *Mahatmas or Masters.* To a Hindu, no doubt, from the very learned Subba Row down to Babula, a Mahatma, Guru or Master is a naked *Yogi* with a *chignon* of entangled and unkempt hair on the top of the head; one who whether an Adwaita, Dwaita or Visishtadwaita, . . . or Vishnava, or whatever else, follows the rules of Patanjali, of Chaitanya Sankaracharya or any other *of the known acharyas;* one who calls upon the name of his 330 crores of deities, repeats parrot-like his *Aums,* etc., etc. For me and those who *know* the Masters *personally,* our "Mahatmas" so-called, are *nothing of the kind.* Olcott is home, and you may ask him what our *Masters* are like, whether from the description he had from me in New York and which was never altered to this day, or from the two Masters he met personally—one in Bombay and the other in Cashmere.

My Masters and *the* Masters are Yogis and Munis *de facto,* not *de jure;* in their life not in appearance. They *are* members of an *occult Brotherhood,* not of any particular School in India. One of their highest *Mahachohans* lived in Egypt and went to Tibet only a year before we did (in 1878) and he is neither a Tibetan nor a Hindu; this "Occult Brotherhood" has not originated in Tibet, nor is it *only* in Tibet now; but what I always said and maintain to this day is, *that most of its members and some of the highest* are, and live constantly, in Tibet, because of its isolation and freedom from Christians; that its origin is of untold antiquity, and is as much Masonic as present Masonry *is little* Masonic; . . . and finally that if I spoke only (to our Fellows of T. S.) of two or three Masters it is because my own Masters happen to be a Rajput by birth—and "Koothoomi" a Cashmerian, and therefore these were likely to be more authoritative with the Hindus than the rest of them.

Ask Olcott, Sinnett, and even Hume, and even the latter could not without saying *a lie* tell you that I had not repeated this to them over

and over again, adding many a time that even *few lamas* knew the whole truth about the *"Chapa"* (men-spirits) as they call them on account of their having so little to do with the general mass of the people. I said and repeat, that they are *living men* not "spirits," or even *Nirmanakayas,* that their knowledge and learning are immense, and their personal holiness of life is still greater—still they are mortal men and none of them 1,000 years old, as imagined by some. What I said and say, was and is, the truth; those who will have it, all right; those who see in what I say a cleverly concocted romance by me, are also welcome. . . .

When we went to Pondichery with Olcott to form a Branch, instead of fifty or sixty members we got but three or four. Why? Simply because I had said to an influential member that our Mahatmas did not sit buried in the earth letting their toe and finger nails grow a yard long and the birds make nests in their top-knots—for such was his idea. He left the T. S. and led away almost all others. Ask Olcott; he must remember the fact. And yet in the very room where visitors came to see us, in the crowd there stood a *living Mahatma,* whom I knew for years, who lives in the neighborhood, but whom no one seemed to know in Pondichery, and who was mistaken for a Malayalin—a stranger!

"Somebody Has Said Something . . ."

Let two idle tongues utter a tale against some third person, who never offended the babblers, and how the tale spreads, like fire, lighted none know how, in the herbage of an American prairie! Who shall put it out?

What right have we to pry into the secrets of other men's hearths? True or false, the tale that is gabbled to us, what concern of ours can it be? I speak not of cases to which the law has been summoned, which law has sifted, on which law has pronounced. But how, when the law is silent, can we assume its verdicts? How be all judges, where there has been no witness-box, no cross-examination, no jury? Yet, every day we put on our ermine, and make ourselves judges—judges sure to condemn, and on what evidence? That which no court will receive. Somebody has said something to somebody, which somebody repeats to everybody! —Bulwer Lytton

THE PERPETUAL CHOICE

IF the destiny of an individual could be settled by a single decision, life would be an easy matter. If truth could be gained by an affirmation of belief, the gaining of knowledge would also be a facile process. The whole secret of successful living, however, would appear to be in the unbroken continuity, persistency, and consistency of the choices made. At various crucial points in an individual's life he has probably resolved to make the highest choice of which he believed himself capable. In such moments he imagined himself making a final decision; thenceforth, without doubt or wavering, the course laid out was to be pursued. Disappointment arises when his enthusiasm wanes and his plans are even forgotten. Many a student of Theosophy, for example, has felt he could overcome some selfish tendency by an instantaneous resolution, only to find this an impossible achievement. Or perhaps he has sought to control his mind powers, and expected his intention to automatically do the job for him. After repeated attempts he eventually realizes that conscious concentration must be creatively sustained from moment to moment.

This delusion regarding the sufficiency of one decision can perhaps be traced to the doors of dogmatic churchianity. It has decreed that *one* belief will take an individual to heaven; that all his past, present, and future sins and failures are wiped away through the affirmation that someone else died and atoned for him. The idea may also have its source in the view that there is an eternal paradise wherein one can rest forever on his laurels, with no need for further struggle or choice.

Many a school student has been similarly deceived in his search for knowledge. He thought that once sufficient information was accumulated he qualified for the title of a learned man. Of such it has often been said: "Satisfaction of curiosity [or in some cases, the receipt of a diploma] is the end of knowledge for some men." The process of learning and searching having ceased, the man enters once more the ranks of the intellectually torpid. The vast mass of college students who end their schooling as they leave the graduation hall, may fit the foregoing description.

The desire to reach a state of non-choice manifests in numerous other ways. Nations have lost their liberties through succumbing to

the notion that their political freedom is self-reproducing. The citizens therefore lapse in the task of guarding, re-earning, and constructively using their rights. Modern medicine is continually in search of a cure-all; thus doctors would not be obliged to look into the nature of each disease and find its appropriate remedy. People have sought to acquire such virtues as kindness, sympathy, and generosity, with the idea that they could automatically be kind and generous to everyone, without troubling themselves about analyzing the needs of each case. They failed to recognize that discrimination must be exercised even in the manifestation of the virtues, lest such vices as ingratitude and the tendency to dominate others be encouraged in certain people. Consequently, we find numerous persons who are consistently mild and obliging to everyone, even in situations which call for firm action on principles—the truest kindness to all concerned.

A working understanding of man's complex invisible constitution as taught in Theosophical philosophy comes to our aid in comprehending why choices must be sustained if they are to become permanent directive influences in our lives. Even a cursory study of one's inner nature will disclose that it is not presently composed of homogeneous elements. Frequently a person's mind tends in opposite direction to his feelings, and vice versa. Even within the mind itself there are conflicting lines of interests. One part of a man's nature may yearn to devote itself to the search for truth, or for the salvation of mankind, while other departments habitually listen to the voice of self-interest and the petty concerns of daily sensuous living. This is most important to realize and understand, for there is not only a Divine but also a self-made satanic entity in every man who has yet to accomplish the purpose of life.

The Divine nature could be viewed as the immortal thinker, which is essentially identical with the Universal Spirit behind and within all worlds. While this higher nature is simple, coordinated and one-pointed, the inferior being partakes of the coarseness, sluggishness, or passionate quality of differentiated nature. Portions of the elemental man love wild, uninhibited activity, while others can be compared to lead, difficult to move and rouse. All these elements, Theosophy avers, can be controlled, refined, transmuted, and raised to form a responsive working instrument to serve the purposes of Soul.

When, then, an individual resolves to attain a certain goal, it behooves him to be alertly aware that only part of his nature has made the choice; other aspects will do all to oppose, knowing well that to acquiesce means to starve and die. Obviously, there can be no ultimate victory until the entire nature has confirmed and ratified the selection of his mind. So long as a dissenting "atom" remains, the complete union with the Real is delayed. Consequently, a course of persistent but gradual education must be pursued. The higher portion of the *lower* nature is perhaps easily conquered, for being closer to the plane of mind and soul, it responds to the dictates of reason and unselfishness. Not so with the baser parts; no amount of reasoning or pleading will avail. In fact, the more the student argues, the more attention and nourishment such elements receive. The kind of warfare to be conducted naturally varies with the Soldier and the obstacles to be overcome. Sometimes just to hold one's ground is a great conquest. "It is better to endure when we can do nothing than to faint and fall. . . ." When the lower forces finally become convinced that we "mean business," that we will never, never turn back, they surrender unconditionally and are resurrected in a higher form. H. P. Blavatsky indicates that the "human passions and sins which are slaughtered during the trials of the novitiate . . . serve as well-fertilized soil in which 'holy germs' or seeds of transcendental virtues may germinate."

So the battle must be won again and again, it is said, until the entire nature becomes *constitutionally* incapable of deviating from the Soul's purposes. Frequently people say after undergoing some grueling experience: "I could never go through *that* again!" If they cannot, then surely they have not learned its lesson. Great Souls are said to undergo the trials of earth-life over and over, even when they have individually conquered, simply to set the powerful example that true freedom must be perpetually re-won; the ever-striving *are* the ever free. The simple law of cause and effect teaches this much. If each cause brings its corresponding effect, and the effect can endure only in proportion to the intensity of the cause, simple mathematics will show that one decision is only *one* cause, and that unless all subsequent decisions are along the same line, they will negate and counteract the first choice made.

EXTENSIONS OF EVIDENCE

Descartes and the Soul

IN the history of ideas, René Descartes (1596-1650) occupies a distinguished place. He has been called "the father of modern philosophy," and this is true in the sense that science was under the sway of Cartesianism, a revolution started by Descartes, during the whole of last century. Since his day (as Dr. J. H. Randall put it in *The Making of the Modern Mind*) "Purposes gave way to mathematics, human will and foresight to immutable and inflexible mechanical order." The twentieth century, however, has seen Cartesianism becoming less a dogma, especially, perhaps, in the field of biology, where protoplasm is looked upon, not so much as the physical basis of life, but as the "medium of vital manifestation." Nevertheless. Descartes introduced into mathematics the idea of a variable which was never defined, and which enabled mathematical problems to be investigated without specifying any particular conditions. In philosophy, he made the sharp split between mind and matter, which has influenced so profoundly all subsequent human thought. The change that came over the world following this dualism has been admirably described by E. A. Burtt:

> The gloriously romantic universe of Dante and Milton, that set no bounds to the imagination of man as it played over space and time, has now been swept away. Space was identified with the realm of geometry, time with the continuity of number. The world that people had thought themselves living in—a world rich with colour and sound, redolent with fragrance, filled with gladness, love and beauty, speaking everywhere of purposive harmony and creative ideals—was crowded now into minute corners in the brains of scattered organic beings. The really important world outside was a world hard, cold, colourless, silent and dead; a world of quantity, a world of mathematically computable motions in mechanical regularity. (*The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science,* 1932, p. 236.)

It was left to H. P. Blavatsky, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to restore some other aspects of Descartes' philosophy, long neglected by "this strutting game-cock, modern science." In *Isis Unveiled,* she referred to the famous Frenchman as "one of the few who believed and dared to say that to occult medicine we shall owe discoveries 'destined to extend the domain of philosophy' " (I, 71), and as "one of the most devoted teachers of the magnetic doctrine

and, in a certain sense, even of Alchemy. . . . The magnet-streams of Mesmer are disguised by him into the Cartesian vortices, and both rest on the same principle" (I, 206-7). In *The Secret Doctrine,* H. P. Blavatsky particularized. "It is," she wrote, "well known (and also regarded as a fiction now, by those who have ceased to believe in the existence of an immortal principle in man), that Descartes saw in the pineal gland the *Seat of the Soul.*" She added:

> Although it is joined to every part of the body, he said, there is one special portion of it in which the Soul exercises its functions more specially than in any other. And, as neither the heart, nor yet the brain, could be that "special" locality, he concluded that it was that little gland tied to the brain, yet having an action independent of it, as it could easily be put into a kind of swinging motion *"by the animal Spirits which cross* the cavities of the skull in every sense." [The "animal spirits" (?) are equivalent to the currents of nerve-auric compound circulation.—H.P.B.] Unscientific as this may appear in our day of exact learning, Descartes was yet far nearer the occult truth than is any Hæckel. For the pineal gland as shown, is far more connected with Soul and Spirit than with the physiological senses of man. (*S.D.* II, 298.)

On no ground has the plea for an impartial hearing of the doctrines of archaic wisdom met with firmer rejection than on that of the nature of the soul. The churches see their vested interests imperilled unless mankind is led to believe that each soul is newly created and can only be saved by their ministrations. In the sphere of physical science, we find what H. P. Blavatsky called "this stupendous pretension," namely, "that the higher and more perfect the working of the Soul, the more amenable it is to the analysis and explanations *of the zoologist and the physiologist alone* (Haeckel on 'Cell-Souls and Soul-Cells')." Amid the din aroused by these controversies, H.P.B.'s voice was heard demanding "definite words for definite things." Her *Key to Theosophy* gives English equivalents of Occult Eastern terms for Higher Self, Spiritual Ego, Higher Ego, and Personal Ego. The fact is that, apart from the language of the esoteric philosophy, and the metaphysics that has found its way into the philosophical schools of antiquity, no adequate expressions exist for determining the true nature of man.

Theosophical students will turn with relief, therefore, to any discussion in modern terms which has the effect of clarifying the meaning of the word "soul." Sir Geoffrey Jefferson, FRS., FRCS., Pro-

fessor of Neuro-Surgery in Manchester University, has made clear what Descartes meant by "soul." In a radio lecture, he reminded his audience that for us, today, the word has, except in poetry, little but a purely religious meaning; but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, its connotations were derived from the various uses to which the word *anima* had been put by the ancients. He spoke of the ambiguity associated with the usage of *anima;* but, as to this, H. P. Blavatsky pointed out long ago: "Too many of our thinkers do not consider that the numerous changes in language, the allegorical phraseology and evident secretiveness of old Mystic writers, who were generally under an obligation never to divulge the solemn secrets of the sanctuary, might have sadly misled translators and commentators" (*Isis* I, 37). Sir Geoffrey Jefferson then goes on to say:

> Thus there were originally three different souls, the vegetative, the sensitive and the reasoning. It is not possible to translate the vegetative and sensitive souls accurately into physiological language, because the ideas behind them are obsolete. The first implies the quality by which a body is alive, the second (the sensitive) that by which it not only feels but moves, the third (the reason) that by which the individual owning it thinks, and having judgment of events, is responsible for his actions. We come as near as we can to modern paraphrasis by calling these three souls autonomic, reflex, and mental. Now, to Descartes, the word "soul" meant only the third, the reasoning or mental soul, because he was able to get rid of the first two as the result of his mechanical interpretation of bodily actions. (*The Listener,* July 27, 1950.)

Evidently, "soul" meant mind as understood by most physiologists and psychologists today, as well as an immaterial principle of immortality. Viewing it as a *psyche* without religious implications, Descartes contended that animals did not have "souls." They were merely machines, requiring nothing more than their own "works" to make them go. In his own words: "There is no need to conceive in it [the animal] another soul, vegetative or sensitive, nor any other principle of movement and of life except the blood and the animal spirits agitated by the heat which burns continually in its breast"—an obvious echo of what he learnt among his Jesuit friends at his college, Le Fleche. To account for man's particular qualities, which are mental, man was thought of as "a mental animal," a conception which has remained virtually unchanged to the present day, notwithstanding the fact to which H. P. Blavatsky made pointed reference:

> It may be objected, perhaps, that instinct cannot be a spiritual gift, because animals possess it in a higher degree than man, and animals have *no souls*. Such a belief is erroneous and based upon very insecure foundations. It came from the fact that the inner nature of the animal could be fathomed still less than that of man, who is endowed with speech and can display to us his psychological powers. (*Isis Unveiled,* I, 426-7.)

H.P.B. emphasized the interdependence of all living things:

> Descartes denied soul to the animal; Leibnitz endowed, as the Occultists do, "the whole creation with mental life, this being, according to him, capable of infinite gradations." And this, as Merz justly observes, "at once widened the realm of mental life, destroying the contrast of *animate and inanimate matter. . . .*"

That these matters are still the subject of argument is a tribute to the vitality of the esoteric teachings.

From this dualism of soul or mind and physical body arose Descartes' speculations on the localization of the "soul." Sir Geoffrey Jefferson summarizes the reasons which led Descartes to make the pineal gland the nodal point of Cartesian philosophy:

> There was, unhappily, nothing in the gross anatomy of the body that leapt to the eye as the obvious seat of the soul; there was nothing in man's brain that was not recognisably present in a cruder shape in the animal as well. Failing anything thus singular for the soul's lodgment, its place would have to be discovered by argument, and argument ran something like this: its situation should be the most convenient possible for the concentration in small compass of all sensations, because in that way the reasoning soul's judgments could most quickly be passed on what was happening, and decisions made upon them. It would be a neat and elegant solution, like that of a difficult mathematical problem, if it could be shown that the site of man's soul was identical with the central receiving and distributing station of the animal. And that, Descartes thought, was the pineal *(ibid).*

Undoubtedly, the obsession of Descartes with mathematical solutions accounts for much of this explanation of how the soul and mind are attached to the body. But it is not by any means the whole story. Sir Geoffrey Jefferson remarks that "much had already been written before the seventeenth century about the pineal gland, making its choice by Descartes easier than might be supposed." Before Descartes, the gland was thought to depend on "vaporous animal spirits," meaning the invisible nervous impulses carrying the brain's

messages, incoming or outgoing. If it be assumed that the beliefs as to "animal spirits" and the ventricles as their storage place, which formed the accepted theory of Descartes' day, were groundless, Sir Geoffrey counsels us not to be patronizing. "There must be a dozen important things we believe today," he declares, "which are hopelessly wrong, but we are content because we do not know what they are."

We may presume so far to enlighten the eminent neurologist, and those of his colleagues everywhere who think as he does. Among their beliefs which are "hopelessly wrong" are *(a)* the opinion that "so small an object as the pineal was much too small to carry all the traffic that Descartes directed to it," and *(b)* the assertion that "the pineal was a regressive and apparently functionless organ in man" *(ibid)*. Mistaken as Descartes was about many things, in this matter of the pineal gland he "was yet far nearer the occult truth than is any Hæckel," or any of the scientific authorities of the day:

> It was an *active* organ, we say, at that stage of evolution when the spiritual element in man reigned supreme over the hardly nascent intellectual and psychic elements. And, as the cycle ran down toward that point when the physiological senses were developed by, and went *pari passu* with, the growth and consolidation of the physical man, the interminable and complex vicissitudes and tribulations of zoological development, that median "eye" ended by atrophying along with the early spiritual and purely psychic characteristics in man. (*S.D.* II, 298.)

But here we encroach upon another vast subject, the latent psychical powers in man and the law of causation operating through racial evolution. All this has been dealt with adequately in the recorded teachings of the Messengers of the nineteenth century Theosophical Movement. It will suffice to suggest that modern science, in all its multifarious activity, would do well to widen its horizon by extending its study of man to include his complete heredity, "astrally, spiritually and psychically, as a being who knows, reasons, feels and acts through the body, the astral body, and the soul." This was one of the factors enumerated by William Q. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy* as necessary for the exploration and right understanding of psychical phenomena. Certainly, no discussion of the *psyche,* or of the function of "animal spirits" (the nerve-aura of occultism), and no investigation of the pineal gland, are likely to have a successful issue if this pedigree be ignored.

"THE GITA"—INFORMAL ESSAYS

On Everyday Questions

CHAPTER the Seventeenth, entitled "Devotion as Regards the Three Kinds of Faith," is again particularly illustrative of the psychological subtlety of Eastern thought. Also, those studying modern psychology and psychiatry will be able to correlate a considerable number of statements in this chapter with contemporary doctrine, both as based on theory and on clinical experience. Consider, for instance, the subject of the *tamasic* variety of faith. Both the theorist Freud and the present head of the Menninger Clinic write extensively of the "death wish," and the "urge to self-destruction." In much less complicated terminology, Krishna discusses this mysterious, purely negative tendency of the human mind, and intimates the dominant role it may play in determining everyday attitudes towards experience. While Karl Menninger's volume of case histories, *Man Against Himself,* deals with man's fear and distrust of himself, in a modern setting, the same drama has actually been performed against a religious backdrop, for millennia, as witness the flagellants of both East and West who have sought to punish their own bodies in the hope of securing a reward of the spirit. In Hatha-Yoga practices, we might say, the mind is turned "in," *against* a portion of itself.

When men pay life the reverse compliment of regarding any of its aspects with horror or loathing, destructive tendencies become rajasically active, and belong with the austerities "practiced with hypocrisy, for the sake of obtaining respect for oneself or for fame or for favor." Such negative attitudes, even though powered by the dynamic impetus of *rajasic* energy, have a downward trend. Unless a counter current is developed, the desire for "wounding" others or oneself will finally dominate, since the blending of *tamas* and *rajas* inevitably inspires a desire to destroy something. Yet we may conclude, in this instance, that the destructive urge is not truly an *active* quality at all; it is not the generation of energy that comes from aligning oneself with forces which are developing.

A clinical psychiatrist will be suspicious of any man who speaks, however modestly, of his "renunciations." The very fact that one will mention an "austerity" indicates that there has not been a natural, organically balanced inner relinquishment and that it has not been

adopted with "supreme faith," nor by those who "long not for a reward." It is therefore understandable that, in the development of modern psychology, *all* ideals of austerity have come to sound warped or neurotic. Of course, this is obviously an unwarrantable conclusion and some psychologists have tried to warn against this excessive bias, which can nullify a scientist's impartiality. Carl Jung was but one of many who have realized that the urge for a higher-than-sensual existence demands discipline and control of "natural" impulses, and a code by which one's conduct can conform with the ideal of a higher life. (Cf. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul.*) The extreme opposition in viewpoint between Western religion and Western psychology, incidentally, would not have been necessary if the *philosophical* psychology of *The Bhagavad-Gita* had been made the basis for the Christian religion, and the moralistic tone of the Old Testament discarded in favor of patient self-analysis.

A discussion of the relationship between various kinds of food and the qualities predominating in man's nature, may be used to introduce a subject upon which psychiatry and psychoanalysis, despite all their recent insights and advances, have as yet scarcely touched. It is obvious that the most important food for man is the food of the mind—the ideas, words, and concepts he imbibes in conversation, through reading, through "dwelling on the thing to be realized." The days before the wide dissemination of the printed word were, in a sense, days of protection while man did not have sufficient control over his lower manasic propensities. In later centuries, we have accumulated an incredible series of "art-forms" which transfer impressions, visually, to the mind. These, alone, are multiplied in countless divisions and sub-divisions, while the mind of the average man is also continually churning with the undigested material supplied by radio, magazines, motion pictures and television. But each paragraph read, each broadcast heard, each telecast viewed, each short story or novel encountered, are all food for the mind. Each and every one of these isolated half-experiences will have a permanent effect, for this food goes into the blood and sinews of the psychic man and helps create his future sensitivities.

Only a few moderns have been able to think of ways of adjudging this "food" by simple principles of evaluation—excepting, that is, the innumerable dictators who operate within closed circles of

partisanship, either religious or political. The clinical psychologist often develops some of the impersonal powers of evaluation and analysis which would be necessary in bringing a new science of correlation to birth, but it may be argued that these powers can never be galvanized into fully useful action unless some spiritual view of man's function in evolution is accepted as a fundamental, self-evident premise. Wondrously familiar with the ways of *tamasic* faith, astute in discerning the manner in which dispersions of *rajasic* energy lead to *tamas,* many of these modern men of great capacity halt, hesitant, at the threshold of the *Sattvic* realm. For there is no true *Sattva* quality unless there is Soul. And there is no "soul" for the modern psychologists—nor should there be—until "soul" comes to be thought of as the initial factor in the germination and self-growth in man. The theological area of soul—man's relationship to a God outside his understanding—is barren.

The *Gita,* in its proffering of a Science of the Soul, suggests many criteria for judging food for the mind. The student may find the following brief passage, for instance, a point of departure, by analogy, in evaluating reading material:

> Know that food which is pleasant to each one, as also sacrifices, mortification, and almsgiving, are of three kinds; hear what their divisions are. The food which increases the length of days, vigor and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, and which is savory, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the *sattva* quality prevaileth. The food which is liked by those of the *rajas* quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain, and disease. Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in whom predominates the quality of *tamas* or indifference.

The first obvious suggestion is that the best literature is affirmative—rising, first, above indifference to the search for vital action, and then above a too great concentration upon the passions generated by tribulation. In this context, writing belongs in the *sattvic* category when the best of the "pungency" and the best "salt" of the passional realm have been extracted and refined. As in the case with the duality of *manas,* the ways go up or down for man on the *rajasic*

field of action—either one assimilates, affirmatively, the lessons of experience, or he glamorizes violence of feeling.

It is certainly not difficult to observe here the failure in much of popular reading material to contribute to the *life* of mind. While some authors allow one to feel strength and dignity in their leading characters, others give to their "hero" every imaginable morbid and sordid leaning. Here, the trend is downward, from *rajas* to *tamas,* with decadence providing a perverted fascination. The extent to which "the decadence of Europe" is a fact might even be measured by the absorption of innumerable European fiction authors *with* decadence. ("Food as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless and rotting.") A line from a critic of the *"tamasic"* novels illustrates the aptness of Krishna's analysis, when projected into a modern context: "L. shows that his brutal environment has made B. mean, morose, furtive and sexually distorted; but he gives no clue as to why a mean, morose and sexually disturbed youth should warrant four hundred pages of loving attention." "Loving" attention is correct here, certainly, for it is the *devotion* to the quality of *tamas* which produces such characteristics in a novel, as also in man's personal life.

Even, then, in the different coteries of literary opinion, we may see how our lives are dominated by special allegiance to one or another of the Three Qualities. The great writer, or the great psychologist, who reaches through tamasic and rajasic preoccupation to *sattva*—the quality which *sustains with hope for a brighter life*—is able to point out new ways of thinking for many "who have lost their path in Darkness." Worthy literature and worthy psychology must be affirmative, reaching *above* both criticism and cynicism to point out the spiritual roots of human destiny.

Satiation of a craving does not remove its cause. If we eat, and dissipate hunger, the need for food will soon be felt again. And so with all cravings and tendencies which are classified as bad or low, or those which we wish to get rid of. They must be opposed. To satisfy and give way to them will produce but a temporary dullness. The real cause of them all is in the inner man, on the plane of desire whether mental or physical. So long as no effort is made to remove them they remain there. —W.Q.J.

"WHAT IS THEOSOPHY FOR?"

IT might be well to preface an answer to this question with a brief statement of what Theosophy is not.

If our struggle here for a physical existence and our endeavors and hopes toward the perfection of our ambitions are terminated at the death of the physical body; if after our short span of existence on earth we are plunged into oblivion, would life be worth while? We know it would not. Such is not within the scope of reason.

Neither can we correlate with common sense the doctrine of a personal God and vicarious atonement, with all power vested in a priesthood to be used only at its discretion. Such a warped conception of the teachings of Christ has become a commercial formula for material gain and power; a destructive demon of "spirituality," holding far greater horrors for mankind than the grossest atheism. After two thousand years of such a doctrine we see a world in a death struggle for survival, with the cross on Calvary below sea level in an ocean of human blood.

Theosophy is in full accord with the pure and undefiled teachings of Jesus and the many other great teachers of the same ethics all down the ages. It postulates that the potentialities of such beings are within every man. By following their example in unselfish thoughts and actions, we will aid in the establishment of a true Brotherhood of man on earth and impress the ever-evolving lives in the kingdoms below with that spirit.

Such is the ultimate goal of Theosophy, which can be reached only by assuming our own responsibilities in self-induced efforts; by accepting our present reaping as our past sowing, and ever striving to implant in our hearts and minds the seeds of a better harvest.

Thoughts are the seeds of action. Each one is nurtured and energized with good or evil. If we would stop for a moment in our rush for personal gain and pleasure to give a thought to suffering humanity; if we would try to realize what our thoughts of today would mean to the world of tomorrow, we should understand that our opportunity and duty lie in so energizing our thoughts that they would have a creative power for the uplifting of all humanity.

By employing these efforts in our daily lives, we are bringing nearer the day when the deadly roar of the battlefield and the bursting of bombs will be stilled in the building of a new and better world—a world where the pitiful cry of the starving will be but a dying echo of the inhumanity of the past. Such is the ultimate goal of Theosophy.

A Plea for Simplicity

At the present time one of the most urgent needs is for a simplification of Theosophical teachings. Theosophy is simple enough; it is the fault of its exponents if it is made complicated, abstruse or vague. Yet enquiring people are always complaining that it is too difficult a subject for them, and that their education has not been deep enough to enable them to understand it. This is greatly the fault of the members who have put it in such a manner that the people sadly turn away. At public meetings or when trying to interest an enquirer it is absolutely useless to use Sanskrit, Greek or other foreign words. Nine times out of ten the habit of doing so is due to laziness or conceit. Sometimes it is due to having merely learned certain terms without knowing and assimilating the ideas underneath. The ideas of Theosophy should be mastered, and once that is done it will be easy to express them in the simplest possible terms. And discussions about the Absolute, the Hierarchies, and so forth, are worse than useless. Such ideas as Karma, Reincarnation, the Perfectibility of Man, the Dual Nature, are the subjects to put forward. These can be expounded—if you have grasped the ideas and made them part of your thought—from a thousand different points of view. At all meetings the strongest effort should be made to simplify by using the words of our own language in expressing that which we believe.

—William Q. Judge

ON THE LOOKOUT

"The Quaker Way"

Under the title, "The Quaker Way Wins New Adherents," Morris L. Cooke presents some timely points for discussion in the New York *Times* Magazine (June 17). Mr. Cooke, who is chairman of the President's Water Resources Policy Commission, elaborates a technique which is being used, with a large degree of success, in the complex bureaucracy of Washington's endless committees. Mr. Cooke first points out the undeniable disadvantages of majority rule, as applied to administrative problems, not only as to the method of discussing and reaching a conclusion, but also as to the basically oppositional attitude which the "take a vote" psychology engenders:

> The faults of the conventional parliamentary procedure arise from its basic assumption—that there exists a divergence of interests rather than a common purpose. The introduction of a resolution for a yea-and-nay vote is conceived as a kind of contest between opposing forces, each going into battle armed with fully formed conclusions which it then attempts to put over on the other side. If a group cannot force acceptance of the whole program, then it proceeds, by a process of barter, to swap point for point—often without regard to the right or wrong of the individual points.
>
> The outcome of the vote, then, is the victory for one side and a defeat for the other, which leads to grudges. It is likely to represent no group decision based on the intrinsic merits of the case but a sort of ledger sheet showing the result of bargaining negotiations. And it imposes on the minority a course of action in which they do not concur and which they may positively resent. At its most extreme the tenor of this method may be described in the words of a prominent business man in the Twenties, who told a stockholders' meeting: "We will vote first and discuss later."

"The Most Complete Democracy"

The deleterious emotions there described bear out Nehru's point (see June "Lookout") on the need for courteous tolerance. In contrast to the oppositional procedure, Mr. Cooke describes the traditional Quaker technique of arriving at a "sense of the meeting," by a combination of free discussion and quiet thinking. According to Howard H. Brinton, director of Pendle Hill, Friends' Graduate School at Wallingford, Pa., the Quaker method is "the most com-

plete democracy ever devised. Not only do the Quakers refuse to admit the imposed authority of any individual. They do not even admit the authority of the majority. All decisions must be made on the basis of unanimity, reached by a process that considers the opinion of every person, both expert and inexpert. Therefore, a Quaker committee sometimes appears to be amateurish and time-consuming." However, as Mr. Cooke remarks:

> It is well worth this time, in the Quaker view, to develop in a group the willingness to accept unanimously what appears to be the balanced judgment of the majority or the best informed.
>
> First, according to this procedure, a subject is introduced not by presenting a resolution but by "reading a query." This is usually done by the chairman—or "Clerk of the meeting," as he is known in Quaker groups. Such a departure from parliamentary order is by no means a petty one, for by this simple device, the issue seems to come from the group as a whole instead of being sponsored by one faction within it.

"Cooperation in Diversity"

As is evident, the success of such a technique involves the assumption of a large degree of impersonality. It is precisely in the minimizing of the attitude of opposition or prejudiced thinking that the Quaker method reveals its strength. Members of the group are encouraged to think of themselves as primarily devoted to the welfare of the whole, rather than as partisan representatives of their personal interests. Without this attitude, the Quaker method would be useless, and with this attitude, the conventional parliamentary procedure would undoubtedly work quite adequately. But, as Mr. Cooke points out, a real impersonality is difficult to maintain in the context of majority and minority votes.

It is of interest that the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, in its rejection of all dogmas, and in its refusal to adopt any "definite attitude" or belief toward passing questions of social reform, outlined just such a basis for "cooperation in diversity." Wrote Mr. Judge, "Theosophical Society and Reforms" (Theos. 33: 188-90):

> The Constitution wisely prohibits the adoption of such definite attitudes. This applies to every doctrine, to all schemes, save the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, the one idea on which men of all religions will agree. Other doctrines and plans have supporters and opponents; they have no majority; but Universal Brotherhood

has a constant and growing majority of supporters. . . . We are a free Society, wholly unattached, founded on toleration, neutrally situated between all contentions, and drawing our support from men considered as souls and not from any sectarian or separatist feeling. . . . What we should strive to do is to increase that toleration for every one which alone will open up men's minds to the truth. . . . The bigot—social or theological—who asserts that no one else is right violates in himself the principle of toleration, and has no place on our platform because his nature is intolerant; hence he will either leave the T. S. if he cannot ruin it, or he will be gradually altered by the silent but powerful influence of the toleration, even for his bigotry, which surrounds him in our ranks. Toleration, then, is our watchword, for it is one effect and one expression of brotherhood; that will bring unity in diversity, and with diverse elements held in one bond our strength would be invincible.

"Thoughtful Silence"

Among important "taboos" in the employment of the Quaker method are the use of strong words, provocative language and repetitive discourse. "Members are encouraged to speak just once on a given point, and only after careful thought. And, most significant of all, the individual speaks not simply as a man expressing his own conscience but as the voice of the group addressing itself to the issue at hand."

If a contrary viewpoint is raised, it is considered as if it were one's own for the purpose of treating it objectively. "Getting under the weight" of the other man's doubts is the term the Quakers sometimes use to describe this attitude of respect for the minority viewpoint.

If conflict at any point becomes so heated as to make an agreement doubtful, the Clerk may halt discussion and ask the members to consider the subject for a while in thoughtful silence. The value of such a deliberative period was shown during World War II, when a group meeting in a mid-city Philadelphia office attempted to settle a troublesome strike. . . . The discussion having become bitterly deadlocked, [the president] said: "My partner is a Quaker from Delaware County and I propose that after the manner of Friends we settle down to a period of silence and see if we cannot get some light on these troublesome differences."

After five minutes of profound silence the meeting was called to order and the discussion resumed in a different atmosphere. In a very short time an agreement satisfactory to all was reached.

"In the Pursuit of Truth"

It is to be hoped that the Quaker method will come to be applied to more and more problems, for it fosters that maturity and deliberation, that impersonality which is the *sine qua non* in the pursuit of truth. It has often been said that the method is applicable only to small groups, but even were this so, how much could be achieved by unity among the relatively few leading minds in any field addressing themselves to a common problem. Yet among the groups who have successfully used this method are the Water Resources Policy Commission, the Acheson-Lilienthal atomic energy committee, the Joint Committee on the Organization of the Congress in 1948-9, the present Senate Republican Conference, the International Monetary Fund, the Committee on Economic Development. In addition, one group, consisting of 816 members forming the First National Conference on Aging, used the group process of discussion and decision, and Clark Tibbetts, chairman of one of its principal committees, thinks that the success of the several sections was "almost in direct proportion to the use made of the group method."

That the method requires considerable maturity of mind on the part of participants is evident from this statement of Mr. Cooke's:

> There is no room in the Quaker practice for unreasoned obstinacy in the face of sound evidence, nor for resistance to unity on a particular issue based merely on traditional antagonism. Some Friends themselves go as far as to say that the practice cannot be applied with much hope of success in any group composed of elected representatives who must report back directly to a constituency, for often the constituency holds some minute but unshakable special interests that are contrary to the interests of the group as a whole.

Eliminating "I-Told-You-So's"

In another case, we are told that a large business organization in New York, with a five-man board of directors, has operated successfully for years with the following plan: No program or proposal is adopted unless it is unanimously supported by all five directors. If one member is opposed to the project suggested, the others may try to win agreement by discussion, and if they fail, the matter is dropped. The rules prescribe that the question shall be raised at two succeeding meetings of the board, the dissenting member being asked

each time if he wishes any further clarification. The board meetings proceed in strict secrecy, so that no member is "pressured" either in or out of the conferences, and once a proposal has been brought up three times, without unanimity of opinion being reached, it cannot be re-opened, *except by the dissenting member.* Since the directors act as a unit, responsibility for the success or failure of any project is equally distributed, and no room is left for recriminations from either the majority or the minority who "told them so."

Endless Labyrinths

The following extract from Mr. Judge on Argument—and as a lawyer, his statements carry special weight—will add a few philosophic dimensions to the general subject of conferences:

> I do not like arguments. They lead into endless labyrinths and convince no one. For conviction must come from the inner consciousness absorbing a truth.
>
> If you overcome an adversary in argument you do not convince him of any fact—save that you are better posted on your side of the subject than he is on his side; and leave him with no intention of adopting your theories, but of studying to strengthen his own that he may the better combat yours.
>
> It is better to ask permission to state your case clearly, producing your evidence; then leave your cause to mature deliberation in the mind of your adversary.
>
> If you have a truth, and the soil in which you desire to plant your seed is ready, he will receive it. If not, it is quite useless to argue the matter, thus setting up vibrations of antagonistic force harmful to both yourself and others. . . . Seeds are never *beaten* into the unbroken ground, but *sown* in the tilled soil.

Democratic Education

The shortcomings of the democratic idea applied to education—mass literacy—were well examined, in one aspect at least, by Albert Jay Nock in *Theory of Education in the United States.* Mr. Nock's point was that the true democratic ideal was the affording of equal *opportunity* to all men to acquire education, as well as all other benefits, but that this ideal—being reinterpreted to mean that all men are equally able to take advantage of such opportunities—has resulted in a drastic lowering of educational standards.

The most enlightened attitude toward universal education would establish an uncompromisingly high standard *for those capable of*

achieving it, with appropriate requirements being scrupulously maintained for each distinct level of intellect. Such a hierarchical pattern of education was advocated by Thomas Jefferson. His plan for education in the United States involved a progressive selection, from level to level, of the minds qualified to continue their studies. The relatively small proportion of able minds prepared to attempt the highest reaches of human thought would thus prove their strong desire, persistence, ability and discipline by the test of time and performance.

READING, WRITING, AND EDUCATION

This plan of Jefferson's might have been a universal stimulus to further achievement on the part of *all* men. It would have kept education as a precious privilege, open to all, but only to be obtained by strong effort and strict discipline; instead of what education too often is today, a more or less automatic, and therefore *unchallenging* progress toward mere literacy. Those who speculate on the causes of the admittedly childish reading habits of the American people may thus find part of the answer in the debasement of the ideal and practice of universal education. In a system which aims to educate all men more or less equally, standards are inevitably lowered.

With these considerations in mind, it will be instructive to turn to the *Saturday Review of Literature* (April 7), which recounts an experience of editor Norman Cousins on his recent tour of India. Mr. Cousins relates that in a small Indian village he conversed for forty minutes with "one of the finest conversationalists it has been my pleasure to meet anywhere in the world," a 52-year-old farmer, who was the leading citizen of the village and famous for his knowledge of Hindu religion and philosophy. When Cousins, in leaving, suggested that the discussion be continued by correspondence, he learned that his new acquaintance had never been taught how to read or write. The figures on the illiteracy rate in India are not exact, but Mr. Cousins estimates that his friend's situation is that of close to 85 per cent of the people.

"PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOLARSHIP"

What does this suggest concerning the Indian people, their intelligence and mental alertness? Exactly nothing. Mr. Cousins explains:

> Whatever the shortage of information, there is certainly no shortage of intellectual awareness or acuteness. Even more important is the basic fact that there is a highly developed sense of justice and moral obligation which would excite the admiration of theologians and educators both. A discussion about the purpose in life or about man's relationship to his fellows can be stimulating and rewarding, and though your companions may be unable to read or write, you are not mindful of any lack of philosophical scholarship. . . .
>
> It has yet to be proved whether Western man can keep his civilization from turning against him. The concept of the dynamic society, the concept of rapid progress, the concept of ever-expanding knowledge applied to man's problems, the concept of bigger and better technology to liberate man from drudgery—it has yet to be proved whether these concepts can actually be made to serve human welfare or whether they are beyond man's understanding and control both and therefore may be used against himself. The average Indian is emancipated from modern civilization and its dualism. . . .

"Mysteries" and Suggestion

The evil effects of a system which produces a mass of uneducated and undisciplined literates were indicated by Wm. Q. Judge in the relatively untechnologized times of 1896. In his article, "The Screen of Time" (Theosophy 5: 81), he examined the cause and symptoms of the "light" reading which is a looming psychological disease of our time, and to which has been added, since his day, the cult of the "mystery stories." This last form of reading, involving as it does a great degree of "tolerance" for human—that is, inhuman—violence, for "battle, murder, and sudden death," bears an obvious relation to the general character of our warlike era. No less characteristic, however, although possibly less dramatic, is the prevalence of escape mediums, ingenious contrivances designed to persuade irresponsible millions to surrender yet more of their sense of fitness, of balance, of the humane temper.

With the use of audio-visual mechanisms a growing feature of modern schooling, and with the incessant *suggestion* emanating from radio, movies, and television—"educators" which, these days, account for more of the child's time than school and school-work hours combined—it is all the more necessary to probe for the ultimate influence of what may be called *promiscuous* standards of reading. Irregular, casual, heterogeneous material, such as is thus sifted into

the child mind and psychic nature, is often warned against by educators and psychologists, yet the real effect of such literary mediumship is scarcely appreciated. The Master's letter, quoted elsewhere in this issue, supplies the unrecognized philosophical factor—the transmutation of human energy, and Judge's remarks on the hindrances met by individuals who wish to do good work take off from precisely this observation of the Teacher's. Since school children are presumably being educated so that they may contribute more intelligently to the society and civilization of which they are a part, the relevance of Judge's words is apparent.

BRAIN ENERGY AND SOUL-POWER

> One of these surmountable and unnecessary hindrances [Judge writes] is the prevalent habit of reading trashy and sensational literature, both in newspaper and other forms. This stupefies and degrades the mind, wastes time and energy, and makes the brain a storehouse of mere brute force rather than what it should be—a generator of cosmic power. Many people seem to "read from the pricking of some cerebral itch," with a motive similar to that which ends in the ruin of a dipsomaniac: a desire to deaden the personal consciousness. Sensation temporarily succeeds in drowning the voice of conscience and the pressure that comes from the soul that so many men and women unintelligently feel. So they seek acute sensation in a thousand different ways, while others strive to attain the same end by killing both sensation and consciousness with the help of drugs or alcohol. Reading of a certain sort is simply the alcohol habit removed to another plane, and just as some unfortunates live to drink instead of drinking that they may live, so other unfortunates live to read instead of reading that they may learn how to live. Gautama Buddha went so far as to forbid his disciples to read novels—or what stood for novels in those days—holding that to do so was most injurious. People are responsible for the use they make of their brains, for the brain can be used for the noblest purposes and can evolve the most refined quality of energy, and to occupy it continually with matters not only trivial but often antagonistic to Theosophic principles is to be untrue to a grave trust. . . .

To teach *discrimination* is the central object of education, at home, in school, and in Life itself. Without discrimination, the soul faces "loss of all"; with discrimination, every influence can be weighed and measured by the being itself, and the soul draws ever nearer to true ideas with which to broaden its own karmic education.

THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS

DECLARATION

The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signatures will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with. Write to:

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